



Alex Webb: The Suffering of Light

By Geoff Dyer

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"The Suffering of Light" is the first comprehensive monograph charting the career of acclaimed American photographer Alex Webb. Gathering some of his most iconic images, many of which were taken in the far corners of the earth, this exquisite book brings a fresh perspective to his extensive catalog. Recognized as a pioneer of American color photography since the 1970s, Webb has consistently created photographs characterized by intense color and light. His work, with its richly layered and complex composition, touches on multiple genres, including street photography, photojournalism, and fine art, but as Webb claims, "to me it all is photography. You have to go out and explore the world with a camera." Webb's ability to distill gesture, color and contrasting cultural tensions into single, beguiling frames results in evocative images that convey a sense of enigma, irony and humor. Featuring key works alongside previously unpublished photographs, "The Suffering of Light" provides the most thorough examination to date of this modern master's prolific, 30-year career.

The photographs of Alex Webb (born 1952) have appeared in a wide range of publications, including "The New York Times Magazine," "Life," "Stern" and "National Geographic," and have been exhibited at the International Center of Photography, New York; Walker Art Center, Minneapolis; and the Whitney Museum of American Art, New York. He is a recipient of the Leica Medal of Excellence (2000) and the Premio Internacional de Fotografia Alcobendas (2009). A member of Magnum Photos since 1976, Webb lives in New York City.

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Alex Webb: The Suffering of Light By Geoff Dyer Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #25874 in Books
- Published on: 2011-05-31
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 12.20" h x .90" w x 13.20" l, 5.00 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 204 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

A 30-year retrospective of a great, and often overlooked, American pioneer of colour photography who pays scant regard to genre boundaries, merging art photography, photojournalism and often complex street photographs.--Sean O'Hagan "The Guardian" (12/13/2011)

The images - rich in color and visual rhythm - span 30 years and several continents. Of course, Haiti and the Mexican border are well represented, locales that opened up a new way to see. He has been able to render Haiti - a place often depicted for its chaos - with a precise eye, finding personal moments that are as still as they are complex. He can use shadows as skillfully as a be-bop musician to set the tempo. The people in his frames can look like dwarfs being stomped on by giant, disembodied feet. He can make an American street seem far more foreboding than any Third World slum.--David Gonzalez "The New York Times" (12/18/2011)

In far-flung corners of the globe, Webb captures glimpses of beauty in impoverished lives and stoicism in the face of strife.--Jack Crager "American Photo" (12/01/2011)

About the Author

Alex Webb was born in San Francisco in 1952. His photographs have been featured in The New York Times Magazine, Life, Stern, and National Geographic and exhibited at the Walker Art Center, Minneapolis, and the International Center of Photography and Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. He is a recipient of the Leica Medal of Excellence (2000) and a member of Magnum Photos.

Geoff Dyer is the author of "Jeff in Venice, Death in Varanasi," among other novels, and several nonfiction books, including "Out of Sheer Rage". He won a National Book Critics Circle Award in 2012 for "Otherwise Known as the Human Condition". He lives in Los Angeles.

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